

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PEKING 01631 181057Z

15

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 1631

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TPHY, CH, TW

SUBJECT: "ENEMY STATION" INTERFERES WITH TANGSHAN TELEGRAPH TRANSMISSIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. AN ARTICLE IN PEOPLE'S DAILY RECOUNTS HOW A HEROIC PLA TELEGRAPH OPERATOR IN TANGSHAN OVERCAME INTERFERENCE FROM "ENEMY STATION" AND SUCCESSFULLY TRANSMITTED EARTHQUAKE SITREPS TO PEKING. END SUMMARY.

2. THE LEAD ARTICLE IN THE AUGUST 17 PEOPLE'S DAILY -- "RED ELECTRIC WAVES GET THROUGH TO PEKING" -- DESCRIBES THE HEROIC EXPLOITS OF 22-YEAR-OLD WU TUNG-LIANG, A PLA TELEGRAPH OPERATOR AND COMMUNIST PARTY MEMBER ASSIGNED TO A TANGSHAN UNIT. AWARE THAT AFTERSHOCKS MIGHT CAUSE THE TELEGRAPH ROOM TO TOPPLE IN UPON HIM, OPERATOR WU NEVERTHELESS SCORNS PERSONAL DANGER, REMAINS AT HIS POST, PERSEVERES, AND TRANSMITS AN INITIAL EMERGENCY SIGNAL WITHIN THE HOUR AND SUBSEQUENT SITUATION REPORTS TO SENIOR LEVELS IN PEKING.

3. ALL OF THIS IS RATHER STANDARD--ALBEIT UPLIFTING--FARE. BUT THE SAGA ENDS WITH A NEW WRINKLE: PREMEDITATED INTERFERENCE BY
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PAGE 02 PEKING 01631 181057Z

AN UNIDENTIFIED "ENEMY STATION" CREATES NEW OBSTACLES FOR OPERATOR

WU JUST AS THE AFTERSHOCKS ARE SUBSIDING, EACH TIME THAT WU FINDS A FREQUENCY, THE ENEMY STATION PURSUES AND USURPS IT. "CONSUMED WITH RAGE" AT THIS PROVOCATION BY THE ENEMY STATION, WU COMMENCES A "NEW STRUGGLE," PRESSES HIS EARPHONES EVER TIGHTER TO HIS EARS AND SKILLFULLY SWITCHES FREQUENCIES TOO RAPIDLY FOR THE ENEMY TO PURSUE. IN THE END, TANGSHAN AND PEKING ARE LINKED BY THE "RED ELECTRIC WAVES."

4. THE ARTICLE IS NOTEWORTHY ALSO IN BEING DEVOID ANY REFERENCE

WHATEVER TO THE ANTI-TENG CAMPAIGN. THE ONE MAO-QUOTE CITED AS THE HERO'S INSPIRATION IS FROM THE 1945 "ON COALITION GOVERNMENT": "THIS ARMY HAS AN INDOMITABLE SPIRIT AND IS DETERMINED TO VANQUISH ALL ENEMIES AND NEVER TO YIELD. NO MATTER WHAT THE DIFFICULTIES AND HARDSHIPS, SO LONG AS A SINGLE MAN REMAINS, HE WILL FIGHT ON."

5. COMMENT: WE THINK CHINESE READERS OF THIS ARTICLE PROBABLY WOULD INTERPRET "ENEMY STATION" AS A TRANSPARENT EUPHEMISM FOR "WAIWAN-BASED STATION" (OR "SOVIET STATION").

WE CANNOT SAY WHETHER THERE ACTUALLY WAS DELIBERATE INTERFERENCE WITH EMERGENCY BROADCASTS, THOUGH SUCH A CAPABILITY SURELY EXISTS; SHORT-WAVE TRANSMISSIONS FROM BOTH TAIWAN AND THE USSR ARE EASILY AND REGULARLY HEARD IN THE PEKING AREA. WHATEVER THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER, THE ACCUSATION IS DESIGNED TO STIR UP RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION. THE CHARGE ALSO IMPLICITLY SUGGESTS THAT COMPROMISE WITH THE PERPETRATORS OF SUCH DASTARDLY DEEDS IS MOST UNLIKELY.
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